

## The Arabic verb forms

Most Arabic words are derived from a three-letter (trilateral) root. And each trilateral Arabic root can theoretically be transformed into one of fifteen possible verb forms (الأوزان, al-awzaan). (Forms 11 through 15 are very rare, so people usually just focus on forms 1 through 10, although 9 is also pretty rare). Each form has a basic meaning associated with the general meaning of the root being used. Here's a more detailed breakdown, using فعل (fa3ala, to do) as an example. (This is all taken from old handouts I got at the AUC, so it's not my original work.)

### Form 1 - فعل (fa3ala)

Expresses the general verbal meaning of the root in question

Root	Form 1 verb
خ ر ج (x-r-j) – leaving, departing	خرج (xaraja) – to leave, go out
ج م ع (j-m-3) – joining, uniting	جمع (jama3a) – to gather, collect
ع م ل (3-m-l) – doing, making	عمل (3amala) – to work, to do, to make
ق ط ع (q-T-3) – cutting	قطع (qaTa3a) – to cut, cut off
ب ع د (b-3-d) – separating, distance	بعد (ba3ada) – to be far from

## Form 2 - فَعَّلَ (fa33ala)

Built on form 1 by doubling the middle radical of the form 1 verb (adding a shadda to it)

Often is a causative version of the form 1 verb

خرج (xaraja) means "to go out"; خَرَّجَ (xarraja) means "to make (s.o.) go out; to graduate (s.o.)"

Often an intensive version of the form 1 verb (especially if the form 1 verb is transitive)

جمع (jama3a) means "to collect, gather"; جَمَّعَ (jamma3a) means "to amass, to accumulate"

### Form 3 - فاعل (faa3ala)

Built on form 1 by adding an alif between the first and second radicals of the form 1 verb

Usually gives an associative meaning to the form 1 verb; describes someone doing the act in question to or with someone else

3(عمل amala) means "to work"; 3(عامل aamala) means "to treat or deal with (s.o.)"

### Form 4 - أفعّل (af3ala)

Built on form 1 by prefixing an alif to the form 1 verb and putting a sukuun over the first radical

Similar to form 2 in that it is usually a causative version of the form 1 verb

خرج (xaraja) means "to go out"; خَرَّجَ (xarraja) means "to graduate (s.o.)"; أَخْرَجَ (axraja) means "to expel, to evict; to produce"

## Form 5 - تَفَعَّلَ (tafa33ala)

Built on form 2 by adding the prefix تَ to the form 2 verb

Often a reflexive version of the form 2 verb

تَخَرَّجَ (xarraja) means "to graduate (s.o.)"; تَخَرَّجَ (taxarraja) means "to graduate" (Note: form 5 is usually intransitive)

Sometimes an intensive version of a form 1 verb

تَجَمَّعَ (jama3a) means "to collect, gather"; تَجَمَّعَ (tajamma3a) means "to congregate, to flock together"

## Form 6 - تَفَاعَلَ (tafaa3ala)

Built on form 3 by adding the prefix تَ to the form 3 verb

Usually a reflexive version of the form 3 verb

تَعَامَلَ (aamala) means "to treat or deal with (s.o.)";

تعامل (ta3aamala) means "to deal with each other"  
(Form 6 is usually intransitive)

## Form 7 - انفعّل (infa3ala)

Built on form 1 by adding the prefix ان to the form 1 verb

Usually a reflexive and/or passive version of the form 1 verb

انقطع (inqaTa3a) means "to cut, to cut off"; قطع (qaTa3a) means "to be cut off (from); to abstain (from)"

## Form 8 - افتعل (ifta3ala)

Built on form 1 by adding the prefix ا to the form 1 verb and placing a sukuun must be placed over its first radical

Often a reflexive version of the form 1 verb

اجتمع (ijta3a) means "to collect, gather"; جمع (jama3a) means "to meet; to agree (on)"

Sometimes has a specially derived meaning relative to a form 1 verb

ابتعد (iba3ada) means "to be far away"; بعد (ba3ada) means "to avoid"

### Form 9 - افعَلّ (if3alla)

Built on form 1 by adding the prefix ا to the form 1 verb, placing a sukuun over its first radical, and adding a shadda to the last radical  
Relates to colors

احمرّ (iHmarra) relates to "redness"; ح م ر (H-m-r) means "to become or turn red"

### Form 10 - استفعل (istaf3ala)

Built on form 1 by adding the prefix است to the form 1 verb and inserting a ت between the first and second radicals; a sukuun must be placed over the first radical

Often a considerative version of the form 1 verb; means "to consider or to deem someone to have the quality" of the form 1 verb in question

استبعد (ba3ada) means "to be far away"; استبعد (istab3ada) means "to consider s.o. or s.t. remote or unlikely"

Often a requestive version of a form 1 verb; means "to request or to seek something" for oneself

استعمل (amala) means "to make; to do"; استعمل (ista3mala) means "to use, to put into operation" (that is, to seek to make something work for oneself)

And here's a table of all the verb forms, including their perfect and imperfect conjugations (الماضي), active and passive participles (اسم الفاعل), and verbal nouns (المصدر). Because they're all regular and predictable (with the exception of form 1 - the second vowel in the imperfect and perfect conjugations, and the verbal

noun), if you just memorize them, you'll know them for almost every verb there is. So if you're learning Arabic, I suggest you memorize all the verb forms along with their associated meanings as soon as you can; it'll really come in handy.

المصدر	اسم المفعول	اسم الفاعل	المضارع	الماضي	
؟	مَفْعُول	فاعل	يَفْعُلُ	فَعَلَ	1
تَفْعِيل	مُفْعَلٌ	مُفْعَلٌ	يُفْعَلُ	فُعِّلَ	2
مُفاعِلَةٌ or فِعال	مُفاعِل	مُفاعِل	يُفاعِلُ	فاعَلَ	3
إِفْعَال	مُفْعَل	مُفْعَل	يُفْعَلُ	أَفْعَلَ	4
تَفْعُلُ	مُتَفَعِّل	مُتَفَعِّل	يَتَفَعَّلُ	تَفَعَّلَ	5
تُفاعِلُ	مُتُفاعِل	مُتُفاعِل	يَتُفاعِلُ	تُفاعَلَ	6
اِنْفِعال	مُنْفَعَل	مُنْفَعَل	يُنْفَعَلُ	اِنْفَعَلَ	7
اِفْتِعال	مُفْتَعَل	مُفْتَعَل	يُفْتَعَلُ	اِفْتَعَلَ	8
اِفْعِلال	-	مُفْعَلٌ	يَفْعَلُ	اَفْعَلَ	9
اِسْتِفعال	مُسْتَفْعَل	مُسْتَفْعَل	يَسْتَفْعَلُ	اِسْتَفْعَلَ	10